


**The Pennsylvania State University  
Police and Public Safety Department**

**POLICY AND PROCEDURAL ORDER**

SUBJECT 5.9 Preventing Biased Police Practices			
CALEA REF.	1.2.9	EFFECTIVE DATE	REVISED DATE
PLEAC Ref:	1.8.3	5/7/18	6/12/25
Approved By Chief of Police and Public Safety, Wesley Sheets 			ASSIGNED TO GROUP(s): 1

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to prevent unlawful or improper bias in Public Safety. Profiling persons regardless of their race, color, religion, national origin, mental or physical disability, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation or religious beliefs is totally unacceptable. This policy provides guidelines for the Pennsylvania State University Police and Public Safety (UPPS) employees to prevent such occurrences, and to protect our officers from unwarranted accusations when they act within the dictates of the law and policy (1.2.9a).

**II. POLICY**

While it is the policy of this department to patrol in a proactive, prevention-oriented and visible manner, citizens shall only be stopped or detained when there exists articulable reasonable suspicion to believe they have committed, are committing, or are about to commit, an infraction of the law. Profiling in any manner related to traffic contacts, field contacts, field interviews, and all other biased practices are unacceptable and are prohibited (1.8.3a).

**III. DISCUSSION**

- A. UPPS is responsible for protecting the rights of all citizens on all of the Pennsylvania State University campuses, regardless of race, sex, color, religion, creed, national origin or ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, or veteran status.
- B. Because of the nature of their business, officers are required to be observant, to identify unusual occurrences and law violations, and to act upon them. It is through active patrol techniques that police personnel reduce the opportunities for crime to occur, contribute to making our streets and highways safer to drive upon, and detect and apprehend criminals.
- C. This policy is intended to assist officers in accomplishing this mission in a way that respects the rights and dignity of all persons and yet sends a strong deterrent message to actual and potential lawbreakers that if they break the law, they are likely to encounter enforcement action.

**IV. DEFINITIONS**

- A. **Racial profiling:** A practice that targets people for suspicion of crime based on their race, ethnicity, religion or national origin. Creating a profile about the kinds of people who commit certain types of crimes may lead officers to generalize about a particular group and act according to the generalization rather than specific behavior.
- B. **Biased Practices:** The unequal treatment of any person based solely on his or her perceived inclusion into a particular group of people.
- C. **Reasonable suspicion:** An objectively justifiable suspicion that is based on specific facts or circumstances and that justifies stopping and sometimes searching (as by frisking) a person thought to be involved in criminal activity at the time (i.e. used in terry stops and pat downs).

**V. PROCEDURES**

- A. Officers will receive initial and annual training (based on the Universities calendar year), in preventive enforcement tactics, including training in bias based profiling

issues, officer safety, courtesy, cultural diversity, the laws governing search and seizure, and interpersonal communications skills (1.2.9b) (1.8.3b).

- B. Training programs will emphasize the need to respect the right of all people to be free from unreasonable government intrusion or police action.
- C. In the absence of a specific, credible report containing a physical description, a person's race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation or any combination of these shall not be considered in determining probable cause for an arrest or reasonable suspicion for a stop.

#### **VI. COMPLAINTS OF RACIAL/ETHNIC PROFILING**

- A. Any person may file a complaint with the department if he or she feels the stop or search was based on racial, ethnic, or gender-based profiling. No person shall be discouraged, intimidated, or coerced from filing such a complaint, or discriminated against because of filing such a complaint.
- B. Bias-based profiling or any deliberate recording of misleading information related to the actual or perceived race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation of a person stopped for investigative or enforcement purposes is prohibited and a cause for disciplinary action, up to and including discharge (1.8.3c).
- C. The Executive Deputy Chief or designee will conduct a documented, annual, administrative review of activities with potential for bias to include, but not limited to, traffic and field contacts, asset forfeiture efforts, citizen complaints and any corrective measures taken (1.2.9c) (1.8.3d). Training and procedural practices will be modified if necessary.

#### **Changes:**

- 9/28/23: Title updates made
- 2/8/24: Section VI.C. Language updated
- 9/18/24: PLEAC Reference added